

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Memorandum on Renewing the National Security Council System
February 4, 2021

National Security Memorandum/NSM-2

Subject: Renewing the National Security Council System

To assist the President in carrying out his responsibilities in the area of national security, I hereby direct that the National Security Council system be organized as follows.

A. The National Security Council

The National Security Council (NSC) shall be the principal forum for consideration of national security policy issues requiring Presidential determination. The functions, membership, and responsibilities of the NSC shall be as set forth in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, and this National Security Memorandum.

The NSC shall advise and assist the President in integrating all aspects of national security policy. Along with its subordinate committees, the NSC shall be the President's principal means for coordinating executive departments and agencies in the development and implementation of national security policy, and in long-term strategic planning.

The NSC shall have as its members the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Energy, as prescribed by statute. In addition, the membership of the NSC shall include the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff (Chief of Staff to the President), the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (National Security Advisor), the Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP Director), and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. The Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as designated by statute, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, shall attend NSC meetings in an advisory capacity. The Counsel to the President and Deputy Counsel to the President and NSC Legal Advisor (NSC Legal Advisor) shall be invited to attend every NSC meeting. The Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor (Principal Deputy National Security Advisor) shall attend every NSC meeting, and serve as Secretary.

Given the cross-cutting nature of a number of critical national security issues—such as homeland security, global public health, international economics, climate, science and technology, cybersecurity, migration, and others—the NSC's regular attendees will include, as appropriate: the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the United States Trade Representative, the National Cyber Director, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Deputy National Security Advisor (Homeland Security Advisor), the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies (Deputy National Security Advisor for Cybersecurity), the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics (Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics), the COVID-19 Response Coordinator, or the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. The heads of other

executive departments and agencies, and other senior officials, shall be invited to attend meetings of the NSC as appropriate.

The NSC shall meet regularly and as required. The National Security Advisor, at the President's direction and in consultation with other members of the NSC, shall be responsible for determining the agenda, ensuring that necessary papers are prepared in advance, and recording and communicating NSC actions and Presidential decisions in a timely manner.

B. The Principals Committee

The Principals Committee (PC) will be the senior interagency forum for consideration of policy issues affecting national security. The National Security Advisor shall serve as Chair, and its regular members will be the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and the Chief of Staff to the President. The Director of National Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall attend in an advisory capacity. The Principal Deputy National Security Advisor, the Counsel to the President, the NSC Legal Advisor, and the National Security Advisor to the Vice President shall be invited to attend every meeting of the PC.

Additional regular attendees will be added to the PC when cross-cutting national security issues are on the agenda. Depending on the issue, those attendees will include: the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Trade Representative, the National Cyber Director, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the OSTP Director, the Deputy National Security Advisor for Cybersecurity, the Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics, the COVID-19 Response Coordinator, or the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. When homeland security-related issues are on the agenda, regular attendees will include the Homeland Security Advisor, who, at the discretion of the National Security Advisor, may serve as Chair. The heads of other executive departments and agencies, along with additional senior officials, shall be invited as appropriate.

The PC shall meet regularly, and as called by the National Security Advisor. The National Security Advisor shall determine the agenda in consultation with the other committee members, and shall ensure that necessary papers are prepared in advance and that conclusions and decisions are recorded and communicated in a timely manner. In reporting to the President, the National Security Advisor will represent attendee views and differences faithfully.

C. The Deputies Committee

The Deputies Committee (DC) shall review and monitor the work of the NSC interagency process (including Interagency Policy Committees established pursuant to section D below) and consider and, where appropriate, resolve policy issues affecting national security. The DC shall also help ensure that issues being brought before the PC or the NSC have been properly analyzed and prepared for decision. The DC shall also focus significant attention on policy implementation and strategic planning. Periodic reviews of my Administration's major foreign policy initiatives shall be scheduled to ensure that they are being implemented in a strategic, coordinated, timely, and effective manner. Such reviews should consider whether existing policy directives should be adjusted, refreshed, or rescinded.

The Principal Deputy National Security Advisor shall chair the DC. Its members are the Deputy Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, the Deputy Secretary of

Defense, the Deputy Attorney General, the Deputy Secretary of Energy, the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, the Deputy Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, the NSC Legal Advisor, and the National Security Advisor to the Vice President. The Deputy Director of National Intelligence, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall attend as advisors.

Additional regular attendees will be added to the DC when cross-cutting national security issues are on the agenda. Depending on the issue, those attendees will include: the Deputy Secretary of Labor, the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, the Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, Assistant Administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency, Deputy United States Trade Representatives, the Deputy National Cyber Directors, Deputy Directors of the National Economic Council, Deputy Directors of the Domestic Policy Council, Associate Directors of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Deputy COVID-19 Response Coordinator, or the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. The Homeland Security Advisor, the Deputy National Security Advisor for Cybersecurity, and the Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics shall attend the DC when issues relevant to their positions are on the agenda and, at the discretion of the Principal Deputy National Security Advisor, may chair the DC. The Chair may also invite representatives of other executive departments and agencies, and other senior officials, to attend meetings of the DC as appropriate.

The DC shall meet regularly, as called by the Principal Deputy National Security Advisor—or, at the discretion of the Principal Deputy National Security Advisor, by a Deputy National Security Advisor—in consultation with the members of the DC. A Deputy National Security Advisor will be responsible for determining the agenda, ensuring that the necessary papers are prepared in advance, and preparing and circulating conclusions and decisions in a timely manner. The DC shall ensure that all papers to be discussed by the NSC or the PC fully analyze the issues, fairly and adequately set out the facts, consider a full range of views and options for decision, and fully assess the prospects, risks, and implications of each.

D. Interagency Policy Committees

Management of the development and implementation of national security policies by multiple agencies of the United States Government shall be accomplished by Interagency Policy Committees (IPCs). The IPCs shall be the main day-to-day fora for interagency coordination of national security policy. They shall provide policy analysis for consideration by the more senior committees of the NSC system and ensure timely responses to decisions made by the President. The IPCs shall be established at the direction of the National Security Advisor, and be chaired by his or her designees.

The IPCs shall convene on a regular basis to review and coordinate the implementation of Presidential decisions in their policy areas, and consider and where appropriate resolve policy issues affecting national security. Guidelines shall be established governing the operation of the IPCs, including participation and scope, mandate, and time frames for decision making.

An early meeting of the DC will be devoted to setting up the IPCs and providing their mandates for reviewing policies and developing options in their respective areas, and the DC will meet annually thereafter to review the list of existing IPCs and modify it, as necessary. The IPCs will replace the existing system of Policy Coordination Committees.

E. General

The Vice President and I may attend any and all meetings of any entity established by or under this memorandum.

This document is one in a series of National Security Memoranda that, along with National Security Study Memoranda, shall replace National Security Presidential Memoranda and Space Policy Directives as instruments for communicating Presidential decisions about national security policies of the United States. This memorandum shall supersede all other existing Presidential guidance on the organization of the National Security Council system. With regard to its application to economic matters, this memorandum shall be interpreted in concert with any Executive Order governing the National Economic Council and with Presidential documents signed hereafter that implement either this memorandum or that Executive Order.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Categories: Communications to Federal Agencies : National Security Council system, efforts to renew, memorandum.

Subjects: Defense and national security : Cybersecurity :: Strengthening efforts; Environment : Climate change; Government organization and employees : Federal regulations, review; Government organization and employees : Restructuring and reform; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: National Security Adviser; White House Office : Security Council, National.

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